

Chapter 1

# **MEMORANDUMS AND LETTERS**

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# MEMORANDUMS AND LETTERS

## INTRODUCTION

This part provides guidance for preparing memorandums and letters in a Federal department or agency. It details the preparation of closed and open memorandums, letters, record copy and assembly information, as well as the preparation of other special types of correspondence.

### Memorandums versus Letters

Use memorandums for correspondence within a department or agency, as well as for routine correspondence outside the department or agency. Letters should be used for correspondence addressed to the President or the Vice President of the United States, members of the White House staff, Members of Congress, Justices of the Supreme Court, heads of departments and agencies, State Governors, mayors, foreign government officials, and the public. Letters may also be used to address individuals outside the department or agency when a personal tone is appropriate, such as in letters of commendation or of condolence.

### Stationery

Use agency stationery as follows:

<u>Letter and copies</u>	<u>First page</u>	<u>Succeeding pages</u>
Original letter	Letterhead	Plain bond
Courtesy copy or duplicate copy of original*	Letterhead or duplicate copy of original	Plain
Official file	Yellow (non- automated) White (automated)	Yellow (non- automated) White (automated)
All other copies	White	White

\*NOTE: A courtesy copy that goes outside a major organization should include the letterhead imprint.

### Types of copies

Always prepare an official record copy. For non-automated correspondence preparation, agencies should use only yellow stock paper for official file copies in paper form. In automated correspondence preparation, the record copy may be prepared on white stock paper and will be identified by typing "Official Record Copy" in the right top corner of the page. Provide a

courtesy copy to the addressee only when requested. Keep other copies to a minimum to avoid unnecessary processing and filing. Provide information copies only for those who need to know.

### General Format

The following guidelines apply to all types of memorandums and letters.

### Margins

When efficiency and economy are most important, margins of at least 1 inch and not more than 1-1/4 inches are recommended. When protocol and appearance are most important, short memorandums may be balanced vertically on the page. In such cases, right and left margins may be increased up to 1-1/2 inches. Bear in mind, however, that variations take more time to set up and can cause retypes, increase costs, and delay correspondence.

### Spacing

All elements of a memorandum or letter should be double or triple-spaced from one another so that each part may be seen and read easily. When using a window envelope, the body of the memorandum should begin far enough down to ensure that none of the message shows through the window.

### Style

Correspondence may be in full block, modified block, or indented style. In full block style, all elements are typed flush left. In modified block style, some elements are flush left. In indented style, paragraphs are indented and other elements may be centered, begin at the center, or flush right.

### Using Office Automation

Office automation can increase the speed and accuracy of correspondence preparation. Use it as much as possible.

Make use of office automation capabilities to program all correspondence formats that remain the same, such as margins, spacing, style, captions (if any), and the signing official's name and title. Recurring information can be stored for each signing official for whom an office must repeatedly prepare correspondence. This information may be used for memorandums and letters, official record copy information, and, when required, correspondence covering transmittal summary forms.

Offices with storage and recall capabilities should store all names, titles, addresses, and correspondence symbols for frequently used officials or other addressees. These should be updated regularly, as changes occur.

Clerical staff and program officials should be encouraged to use software "spelling check" features before printing out any correspondence.

## MEMORANDUMS

### Formats

#### Closed Memorandum Format

The closed memorandum format increases economy and efficiency because the preprinted captions are designed to show the address through a window envelope. It is cost effective for offices with a high volume of correspondence. (See Figures 1 through 3 for samples.) Advantages of using the closed memorandum format are:

- Window envelopes reduce both cost and preparation time by eliminating the need to type envelopes.
- Preprinted captions save time by eliminating the need to count lines or make calculations to center the memorandum on the page.

- Placement of the signature at the end of a memorandum prevents unauthorized additions after it has been signed. Also, if an additional page is missing, its loss is obvious.

#### Open Memorandum Format

The open memorandum may be used when protocol and appearance are important. It allows a more personal and informal tone. (See Figures 4 through 6.) To save time in preparing open memorandums, all captions and frequently recurring information—such as signing officials' names and titles—may be stored in office automation equipment.

**Figure 1.** Sample of a Closed Memorandum  
(Window envelope, block style)

The diagram illustrates a closed memorandum format within a window envelope. The envelope is represented by a thick black border. The text inside is as follows:

PUBLIC SERVICE AGENCY  
Washington DC 20000

Date: (Date) ← (Added after signature)

Reply to  
Attn. of: Information Management Branch (GRS)

Subject: Sample of a Closed Memorandum

To: Information Management Division (FSR)  
ATTN: Clearance Officer  
Public Service Agency  
San Francisco, CA 00000

(At least 7 lines)

The format for a closed memorandum is designed for efficiency and economy.

(At least 1 inch)

With preprinted captions the address is typed flush left so it will show through a window envelope. One need not prepare an envelope. Begin the message at least seven lines below the first line of the address to make sure it will not show through the window.

This is also an example of block style. All parts of the memorandum begin flush left.

With the signature element at the bottom, one can be sure no unauthorized material is added after signature. Also, if an additional page is missing, its loss is obvious.

*Chris Lopez*

(At least 5 lines)

CHRIS LOPEZ  
Chief, Correspondence Management Staff

2

Attachment

On the right side of the diagram, a vertical line with arrows indicates line counts: 2, 2, 3, and (14th line to show through a window).

## Date

If the date of the signing is known, include it when preparing the memorandum. Omit the date if the memorandum will be signed in another office. That office will add the date with a date stamp after it has been signed and will then dispatch the memorandum.

## Captions (Closed Memorandum)

### Sender's Reference

The "Reply to Attn. of:" or "FROM:" caption identifies the actual originating office. This may be several levels below the signer's office. The sender's reference therefore enables the recipient to direct questions to the office that can best provide answers about specific details. The sender's reference may

include only mail or correspondence symbols or it may include the title and symbol of the office. For example:

Reply to  
Attn. of: BRXA-10

or

Reply to  
Attn. of: Operations Branch (BRXA-10)

The sender's reference may include a reference to a specific record that the responding office may cite in its response. For example:

Reply to  
Attn. of: Operations Branch (Contract #566A17)

**Figure 2.** Sample of a Closed Memorandum  
(Nonwindow envelope, modified block style)

**PUBLIC SERVICE AGENCY**  
Washington DC 20000

Date: (Date) ← **(Added after signature)**

Reply to  
Attn. of: Information Management Branch (GRS) ↓ 2

Subject: Sample of a Closed Memorandum Using a Nonwindow Envelope and Showing a Subject with a Runover line ↓ 2

To: FSR ↓ 3  
ATTN: Records Officer

3 ↓ This format for a closed memorandum is designed for a nonwindow envelope. The message begins three lines below the address.

**(At least 1 inch)** ↓ This is also an example of a modified block style. All parts of the memorandum are flush left except the signature block.

↓ The subject line in this sample shows how a runover line is typed flush left. This is done whether the memorandum is block, modified block, or indented.

↓ This memo is for internal correspondence in a department or agency. One may use only mail or correspondence symbols. Note that the address has an attention line. Leave two spaces between "ATTN:" and the name or title.

↓ *Chris Lopez*  
**(At least 5 lines)** ↓ CHRIS LOPEZ  
Chief  
Correspondence Management Staff

2 ↓ Attachment

2 ↓ cc:  
Chris Hamilton  
Director, Management Institute  
123 Pine Street  
Hendricks, OH 00000

**Figure 3.** Sample of a Closed Memorandum  
(Nonwindow Envelope, Multiple Addressees)

PUBLIC SERVICE AGENCY  
Washington DC 20000

Date: (Date) ← (Added after signature)

Reply to  
Attn of: Information Management Branch (GRS) ↓ 2

Subject: Sample of a Closed Memorandum Showing Multiple Addressees ↓ 2

AB, CS, HB, BRA-1 ↓ 3

3 ↓ This format for a closed memorandum is designed for a nonwindow envelope. The message begins three lines below the address.

The internal address above is for multiple addressees using only office symbols. After the memorandum is signed and copies are made, circle or make a checkmark by each office symbol in turn.

At least 1 inch) → Notice the attachment line. When attachments are not mentioned in the text, list them as below.

This sample also shows an approval line.

(At least 5 lines) ↓

*Chris Lopez*

2 ↓ CHRIS LOPEZ  
Chief  
Correspondence Management Staff

2 ↓ Attachments:  
Word Division Supplement to the  
GPO Style Manual  
U.S. Government Correspondence Manual

2 ↓ Approved: DVSA \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Figure 4.** Sample of an Open Memorandum  
(Block style)

PUBLIC SERVICE AGENCY  
Washington DC 20000

(Date) ← (Added after signature)

TO: Executive Directors  
Regional Assistant Administrators

2 ↓ FROM: *Patrick Smith*  
Patrick Smith  
Director, Information Management Division (HR)

2 ↓ SUBJECT: Sample of an Open Memorandum

3 ↓ This is an example of a one-paragraph open memorandum which

(At least 1 inch) → consists of less than 10 lines. Note that it is double-spaced.

→ This is also an example of block style.



**Figure 5.** Sample of an Open Memorandum  
(Modified-block, "Thru" Line, Centered on the Page)

PUBLIC SERVICE AGENCY  
Washington DC 20000

(Date) ← (Added after signature)

TO: Jan Jones  
Associate Administrator (R)

2 ↓

THRU: Chris Hammersmith  
General Counsel (G)

2 ↓

FROM: *Patrick Smith*  
Patrick Smith  
Director of Administration (H)

2 ↓

SUBJECT: Sample of an Open Memorandum, Centered on the Page

3 ↓

This is an example of modified-block. The date is centered and the optional signature (if any) begins in the center.

The "Thru" line is placed two lines below the last line of the address. The name, title, and symbol are below and in line with the addressee.

(At least 1 inch) Some departments and agencies prefer the memorandum be balanced on the page to make it more attractive. This example has been balanced on the page.

2 ↓

Attachments (2)

This sample shows how attachments need not be named below if they are cited in the text.

## Special Mailing Instructions

Avoid typing special mailing instructions on the memorandum unless special mailing is required. Special mailing services—such as SPECIAL DELIVERY, CERTIFIED, and REGISTERED—are expensive and should be used only when necessary.

When special mailing instructions must be included, type or stamp them in capital letters on the sender's reference line, beginning at the center of the line or flush right. When multiple instructions are required, type them on the same line separated by a spaced dash. For example:

Reply to  
Attn. of: BRXA-10 SPECIAL DELIVERY—CERTIFIED

## Subject

The subject should be brief (generally not more than 10 words). If captions are preprinted, type the subject flush with the left margin. Type runover lines flush with the left margin.

## Referring to an Incoming Memorandum

When responding to a memorandum, use the same subject and refer to the incoming letter. For example:

Subject: Correspondence practices (Your ltr, 9/11/XX)

## Referring to a Previous Memorandum

When sending a second memorandum to the same person before receiving a reply to the first, refer to the first outgoing memorandum. For example:

Subject: Correspondence practices (Our ltr, (9/11/XX)

## Address

**Internal Address** —When a memorandum is sent through the internal agency mail system, it is efficient to use only an office mail symbol. When this symbol is not known, use the full office title. For example:

To: ABX-5 or To: Operations Division

**PUBLIC SERVICE AGENCY**  
**Washington DC 20000**

(Date) ← **(Added after signature)**

**(No higher than the 11th line)** ↓

TO: Jan Jones  
 Associate Administrator for Finance (S)

2 ↓

Ralph Gonzales  
 Associate Administrator for Budget (G)

2 ↓

FROM: Brook Haynes  
 Director of Administration (B)

2 ↓

SUBJECT: Open Memorandum to Multiple Addressees

3 ↓

The open memorandum may be used when protocol and attractiveness are important. It is considered to have a more informal, personal tone.

This is an example of indented style. All paragraphs are indented. The date is centered and the optional signature (if any) begins in the center.

When addressing more than one addressee, double-space and type each additional addressee's name, title, and (if appropriate) agency in line with the first addressee.

Use judgment to avoid a second page. If only a few lines will carry over, begin as high as the 11th line with no less than a 5-line bottom margin.

**(At least 1 inch)** → Notice the attachment line. When attachments are not mentioned in the text, list them as below.

This example shows how an approval line may be added.

**(At least 5 lines)** ↓ *Brook Haynes*  
 Brook Haynes

2 ↓

Attachments:  
 Word Division Supplement to the GPO Style Manual  
 U.S. Government Correspondence Manual  
 Pages from Federal Information Management Regulations (FIRMR)

2 ↓

Approved:

Administrator (A)

Date

↑ **(No less than 5 lines)**

**Multiple Internal Addressees** —When a memorandum goes to several addressees through the internal agency mail system, proceed as follows:

- Type only the office symbol(s). After the memorandum has been signed and copies made, either circle or place a check after each office symbol in turn. For example:

(First copy)  
To: AB, CS, HS, BRA-1 or To: AB, <sup>✓</sup>CS, HS, BRA-1

(Next copy)  
To: AB, CS, HS, BRA-1 or To: AB, <sup>✓</sup>CS, HS, BRA-1

- Type the full title that applies to all. After the signature, write the appropriate symbol on each copy at the end of the address or in the upper right corner. For example:

(First copy)  
To: Regional operations branches (B)

(Next copy)  
To: Regional operations branches (CS)

**Full Address** —If a memorandum is mailed through the United States Postal Service in a window envelope, type the address single-spaced and in block style. In order for the address to be seen through the window, each line must be no longer than 4 inches and the entire block must contain no more than five lines. Indent runover lines to avoid confusion. For example:

To: Chris Brown, Director  
Technology and Information  
Resources Division  
ABC Company  
Monrovia, CO 00000

**Federal Agency Addresses** —When sending a memorandum through the Postal Service to another office of one's agency or to another agency, include the office symbol in the address to speed internal delivery. For example:

To: Director  
Information Management Division (DRT-5)  
Public Service Agency  
Washington, DC 00000

**Attention Line** —An attention line increases efficiency when the memorandum is important enough to be seen by the receiving office and can be routed promptly to the subordinate who will act on it. Type "ATTN:" flush left in the address. For example:

To: Information Management Division (RFC)  
ATTN: Records Officer

## Captions (Open Memorandum)

### The Address Line

Begin "TO:" on the 14th typing line from the top of the page. For a shorter memorandum, begin more than 14 lines from the top to center the memorandum vertically. (Use judgment to avoid creating an unnecessary second page. If only a few lines will carry over, begin as high as the 11th line with no less than a 5-line margin at the bottom.) Include the addressee's full name and title, placing the mail or correspondence symbol (if any) in parentheses. When addressing more than one official, double-space and type the second addressee's name, title, and agency in alignment with that of the first addressee.

### The "THRU:" Line

When sending a memorandum to an official through another person, double-space after the last line of the address and type "THRU:" at the left margin. Then align the name, title, and symbol with the addressee.

### The Sender Line

Type "FROM:" in capital letters or initial caps two lines below the previous text. Align the sender's full name, title, and mail or correspondence symbol with that of the addressee.

### The Subject Line

Type "SUBJECT:" in capital letters, flush left, two lines below the name of the sender. Align the subject in initial caps with the sender's name and title.

## Body of the Memorandum

### Spacing

Begin the body of the memorandum three lines below the last line of the address. When using a window envelope, begin at least seven lines below the first line of the address to make sure none of the body will show through the window. Single-space lines in the paragraph and double-space between paragraphs. Double-space one paragraph memorandums of 10 lines or less. Break long paragraphs into subparagraphs for easier understanding.

### Identifying Paragraphs

Numbering and lettering paragraphs makes it easier to refer to them. Suggestions for numbering and lettering paragraphs are included in Figure 7.

**Figure 7.****Numbering and Lettering Paragraphs**

1. Numbering and lettering paragraphs can be helpful as a reference aid. When main paragraphs are not numbered, one may refer to them in numbers (such as "in paragraph 2") and assign letters to subparagraphs.

a. Subdivided paragraphs are more easily understood when identified with alternating numbers and letters. The following sequence is suggested: 1, a, (1), (a), 1, a, (1), (a).

(1) When a paragraph is subdivided, it must have at least two subdivisions.

(2) When citing a subparagraph, type it without spaces; for example, "subparagraph 1a(2)."

b. When letters are lengthy, underlined titles or captions will make it easier to read and reference.

2. Arrangements may differ from the one shown here to meet special requirements, such as those for legal documents.

**Carrying Over to the Next Page**

Begin a paragraph near the end of a page only if there is room for at least two lines. When continuing a paragraph on the following page, carry over at least two lines. A single line or less (unless it is a single-line paragraph) at the top or bottom of the page may distract the reader.

**Provide a Point of Contact**

If appropriate, provide in the text the name of a contact person and his or her telephone number so the reader may follow up if he or she has further questions. (For exceptions, see Congressional and White House Correspondence.)

**Succeeding Pages**

Type succeeding pages on plain bond paper and number them.

**Signature (Closed Memorandum)**

Type the signer's name and title in the signature block at least five lines below the last line of text.

**Optional Signature  
(Open Memorandum)**

Instead of signing on the "FROM:" line, an official may choose to sign at the bottom of the open memorandum to ensure that nothing will be added after it has been signed. When this is the case, type the official's name at least five lines below the text.

**Attachment(s)**

Any additional material included with a memorandum is called an attachment. (With a letter, it is referred to as an enclosure.) Type "Attachment" flush left two lines below the signature block. If there is more than one attachment, indicate the number. When attachments have special importance or are not cited in the memorandum, list them. For example:

Attachments (2)

*or*

2 Attachments

*or*

Attachments:

Word Division Supplement to the GPO Style Manual  
U.S. Government Correspondence Manual

**Courtesy Copy**

Avoid sending a courtesy copy to the addressee unless it has been requested. If the sending office wants the addressee to know a copy is being sent to others, type "cc:"—for "courtesy copy"—two lines below the previous line. For example:

cc:

Chris Hamilton  
Director, Management Institute  
123 Pine Street  
Hendricks, OH 00000

*or*

cc: Director of Administration (XE-8)

*or*

cc:  
XE-8

**Approval Line**

When approval, endorsement, or action by another official is requested, type the appropriate format below the signature block. At lower levels of an organization, a symbol on the same line is more efficient. For example:

Approved:

or

Director of Administration (D)

Date

Concurrence:

or

Director of Administration (D)

Date

Approved: DVSA \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## LETTERS

### Introduction

An attractive, consistently formatted letter can create a favorable impression. A more formal form of correspondence than memorandums, letters generally are not used within an

organization unless a personal tone is desired. Letters may be sent when addressing individuals outside the department or agency. (See Figures 8 through 11 for samples.)

**Figure 8.** Sample of a Letter  
(Block style)

PUBLIC SERVICE AGENCY  
Washington DC 20000

July 15, 19xx ← (Added after signature)

(14th line to show through a window) ↓  
The Honorable Jan Anderson  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

2 or 3 ↓  
Dear Senator Anderson:

2 ↓  
This letter is an example of block style. All parts of the letter are flush left.

(At least 1 inch) →  
Left and right margins are at least 1 inch and not more than 1 and 1/4 inches. Each part of the letter is double-spaced from the previous text. The signing official's name and title are typed at least five lines below the complimentary close. For attractiveness, one may choose to center the letter on the page.

This is an example of the letter to a Member of the United States Senate. See the chapter on forms of address for guidance on various forms of address.

When an enclosure is mentioned in the text, it may be cited as below. When enclosures are not mentioned in the text, list them.

2 ↓  
Sincerely,

(At least 5 lines) ↓  
*Tyrone W. Sweissen*  
Tyrone W. Sweissen  
Administrator

2 ↓  
Enclosure

**Figure 9.** Sample of a Letter  
(Modified-block, Window Envelope)

PUBLIC SERVICE AGENCY  
Washington DC 20000

July 15, 19xx ← (Added after signature)

(14th line to show through a window) ↓  
Mr. Edwin Johnson, President  
The Johnson Corporation  
ATTN: Contracting Officer  
100 Main Street  
Any City, ST 00000

(At least 7 lines) ↓  
Dear Mr. Johnson:

2 ↓  
This letter is an example of modified-block style. The date is centered or flush right. The complimentary close and signature block begin at the center. Paragraphs are blocked.

For a window envelope, begin the address on the fourteenth line so it will show through the window. Begin the next text at least seven lines below the first line of the address to make sure it will not show through the window.

(At least 1 inch) ↓  
Left and right margins are at least 1 inch and not more than 1 and 1/4 inches. Each part of the letter is double-spaced from the previous text. The signing official's name and title are typed at least five lines below the complimentary close.

This letter shows how an attention line may be included in the address. It also shows that when enclosures are not mentioned in the text, they should be listed as below.

2 ↓  
Sincerely,

(At least 5 lines) ↓  
*Pat W. Lopez*  
Pat W. Lopez  
Director, Correspondence Branch

2 ↓  
Enclosures: Word Division Supplements to the  
GPO Style Manual  
U.S. Government Correspondence Manual

## Date

If the date of the signing is known, include it when typing the letter. Omit the date if the letter will be signed in another office. The date will be added with a date stamp after the letter has been signed.

## Optional Reference Line

A reference line may be included so that the reader may learn immediately what the letter is about. It may be double-spaced either before or after the salutation. For example:

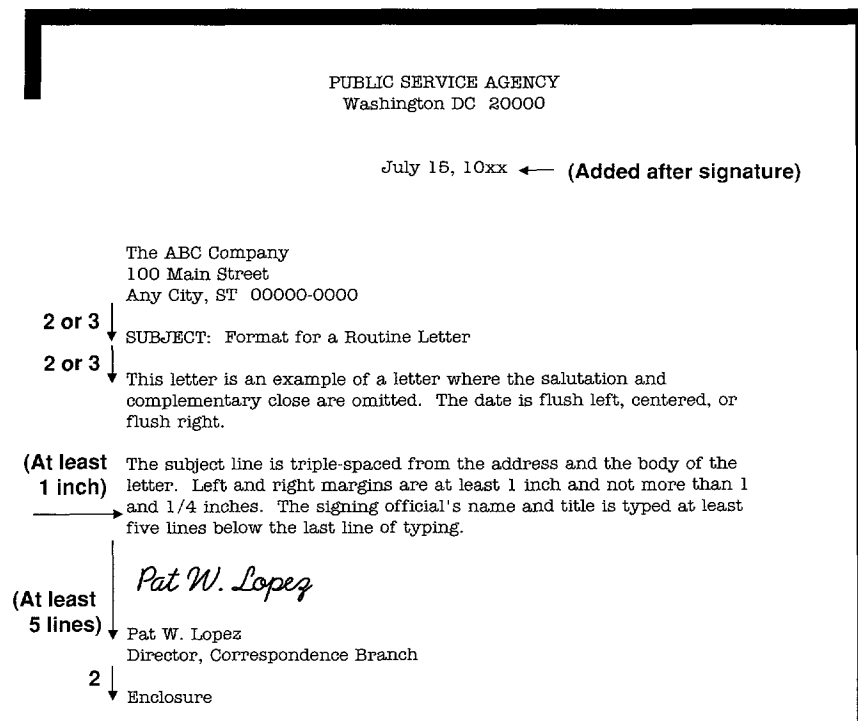
Ref: Contract No. 53080

## Special Mailing Instructions

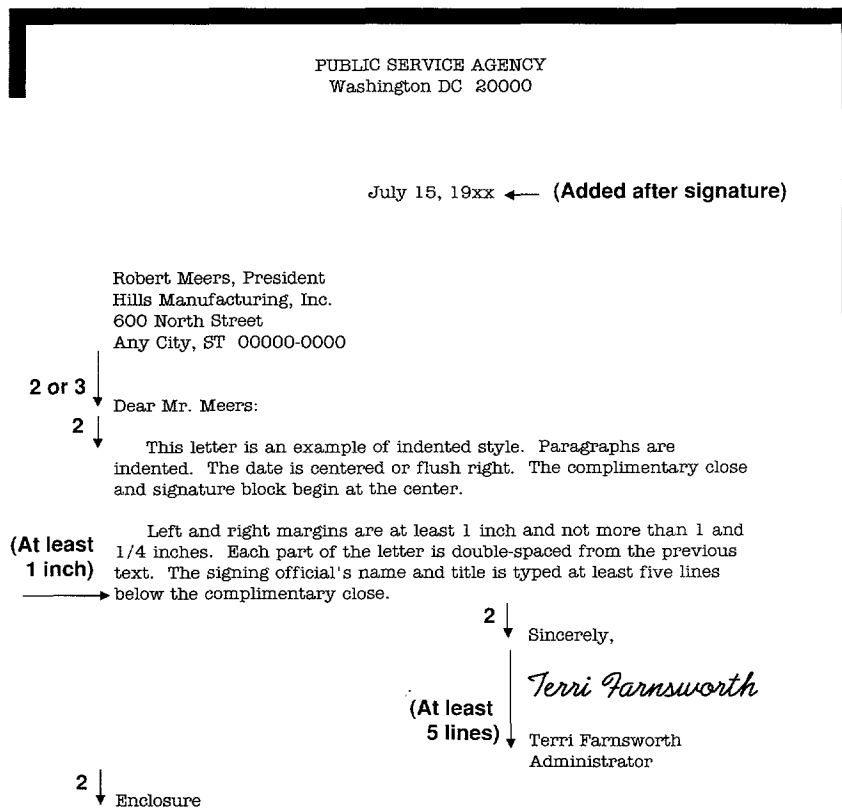
Avoid typing special mailing instructions on the letter unless they are required for legal reasons. Special mailing services, (such as SPECIAL DELIVERY, CERTIFIED, and REGISTERED) are expensive and should be used only when necessary.

When special mailing instructions must be included, type or stamp them in all capital letters above the address, beginning at the center of the line or flush right. For more than one instruction, type both on the same line separated by a dash. For example: SPECIAL DELIVERY — CERTIFIED

**Figure 10.** Sample of a Letter  
(Blocked, Routine, Salutation Omitted)



**Figure 11.** Sample of a Letter  
(Indented)



## Address

The following guidelines apply to matters of letter format and content. For questions of titles, spelling, and other related matters, see Chapter 4, or the GPO Style Manual.

### Format

Always single-space the address, blocked left. Indent a runover line to show it is a continuation. Assuming there is a 1-inch margin, the address line must be no longer than 4 inches to show through a window envelope.

### Internal Mail Symbols

If the letter will be delivered by an internal mail system, include an internal mail or correspondence symbol to ensure prompt delivery.

### Postal Service Requirements

When a letter goes through the U.S. Postal Service, the last line must contain only the city, State, and ZIP Code. Use only the U.S.P.S.-approved State abbreviations listed in Chapter 5. Use one or two spaces between the State and ZIP Code. The next to the last line must be the delivery point line, whether it is a street number and name; a street address with suite or apartment number; a box number followed by post office station; or a rural delivery route followed by a box number. For example:

000 Any Street, Suite 000  
City, ST 00000

or

Suite 000000  
Any Street  
City, ST 00000

or

Box 00, Potomac Station  
City, ST 00000

### Attention Line

An attention line expedites delivery of the letter to the person who will act on it. When appropriate, type "Attention:" or "ATTN:" two lines below the address, flush left. Follow by two spaces and the individual's name. The salutation should state the addressee of the letter, not the person named in the attention line. (On the envelope the attention line must be within the address. Information placed below the city, State, and ZIP Code line cannot be read by automated scanners; it will require manual processing and slow delivery. (See Figure 12.)

**Figure 12. Address**

<b>Letter and envelope the same:</b>	<b>Optional on letter only:</b>
Director, Automation	Ms. Elizabeth Heiden
Management Division (MSF-1)	Records Management
ATTN: Correspondence Officer	Association of Virginia
Public Service Agency	5315 Colby Drive
Washington, DC 20000	McLean, VA 22030
	Attention: Ms. A. Cuomo
	Dear Ms. Heiden

### Salutation

Type the salutation two spaces below the address (or optional separate attention line, if any). When using a window envelope, type the salutation at least seven lines below the first line of the address to ensure it will not be seen through the window. Always use a colon at the end. For routine letters, the salutation may be omitted. For further guidance, see Chapter 4.

### Body

#### Spacing

Begin the body of the letter two lines below the salutation or previous text. Single-space lines in the paragraph and double-space between paragraphs. For short letters of 10 lines or less, double-space between lines and triple-space between paragraphs. Break long paragraphs into subparagraphs for better understanding.

#### Identifying Paragraphs

Numbering and lettering paragraphs makes it easier to refer to them. Further suggestions for numbering and lettering paragraphs are included in Figure 13.

#### Carrying Over to the Next Page

Do not begin a paragraph near the end of a page unless there is room for at least two lines. When continuing a paragraph on the following page, carry over at least two lines.

#### Providing a Point of Contact

If appropriate, provide in the text the name of a contact person and his or her telephone number so that the reader may follow up with further questions. (For exceptions, see "Congressional and White House Correspondence.")



## Succeeding Pages

Type succeeding pages on plain bond paper and number them.

## Complimentary Close

For the appropriate complimentary close, see Chapter 4. Type the complimentary close flush left if full blocked, or beginning at the center if modified blocked.

## Signature Element

Type the signature element five lines below the complimentary close.

## Format

Type the name on the first line and the title on the second. Indent runover title lines the same number of spaces as in the address.

**Figure 13.** Numbering and Lettering Paragraphs

1. Numbering and lettering paragraphs can be helpful as a reference aid. When main paragraphs are not numbered, one may refer to them in numbers (such as “in paragraph 2”) and assign letters to subparagraphs.

a. Subdivided paragraphs are more easily understood when identified with alternating numbers and letters. The following sequence is suggested: 1, a, (1), (a), 1, a, (1), (a).

(1) When a paragraph is subdivided, it must have at least two subdivisions.

(2) When citing a subparagraph, type it without spaces; for example, “subparagraph 1a(2).”

b. When letters are lengthy, underlined titles or captions will make it easier to read and reference.

2. Arrangements may differ from the one shown here to meet special requirements such as those for legal documents.

## Enclosure(s)

Type “Enclosure(s)” flush left two lines below the signature element. If there is more than one enclosure, show the number. When they have special importance, or are not cited in the letter, list them. (The abbreviation “Encl.” may be used when the enclosure has been cited in the text.) For example:

Enclosures (2)

*or*

2 Enclosures

*or*

Enclosures:

Word Division Supplement to the  
GPO Style Manual

U.S. Government Correspondence Manual

## Separate Cover

If material cited in the text is sent under separate cover, type “Separate Cover:” flush left, two lines below the last line of text. List the material, even if it has been identified in the text. For example:

Separate Cover:

Membership List for Virginia

List of Records Officers for the State of Virginia

When the material is mailed, be sure to include with it a copy of the original letter.

## Courtesy Copy

Avoid sending a courtesy copy to the addressee unless it has been requested. If the sending office wants the addressee to know a copy is being sent to others, type “cc:” for “courtesy copy” two lines below the previous line. For example:

cc:

Ms. Chris Hamilton  
Director, Management Institute  
123 Pine Street  
Hendricks, OH 00000

*or*

cc: Ms. Chris Hamilton  
Director, Management Institute  
123 Pine Street  
Hendricks, OH 00000

# OFFICIAL RECORD COPY PREPARATION AND ASSEMBLY FOR SIGNATURE

## Official Record Copy Information

The official record copy includes all relevant drafting information about the correspondence. Place it two lines below the last line of printed text or where space permits. (See Figure 14.)

## Distribution of Copies

Type "cc:" for courtesy copies (or "bc:" for blind copies) two lines below the last line of text. On the same line or on the line below, type the symbol of the office maintaining official and reading copies as well as those of the offices receiving copies. Mark a copy for each recipient.

## Identification Line

On the identification line type the office symbol; the author's (or drafter's) first initial and last name; the typist's initials; the date; the author's phone number; the electronic identification, such as the disk or the drive on which the electronic copy is stored and the title of the document; and the file symbol under which the official record is filed. If the document has more than one author, identify each of them. For example:

BCFG:ElJames,CDavis:elj:10/29/XX:423-8071:<Dir.A>  
format:file-9C1

## Concurrences

Type "Concurrences:" flush left, two lines below the identification line. Provide enough space for the concurring official's full surname and six spaces for the date. Preprinted yellow concurrence sheets with blocks may also be used.

## Notes

Type or handwrite any notes providing additional information that should be in the record.

## Rewrites and Retypes

Each time a memorandum or letter is rewritten or retyped, an updated identification line should be added to the official record copy. (See Figure 16) Include the name of the person who rewrote it or the typist's initials. Replace and destroy all previous copies except the official yellow copy and the marked-up one. Mark through the previous official copy with a diagonal red line and staple it to the rewritten one. If the marked-up copy is other than the official yellow, fold it and place it on the top of the package for the attention of the rewriter or reviewer. If someone else did the retyping, that person's initials should be in the retype line.

## Assembly for Signature

Assemble the memorandum or letter in a manner in which it can be easily (a) reviewed by the signing official and (b) dispatched by the signing level office. The assembly illustrated in Figure 17 is an efficient way for most Federal offices to assemble documents. Staple the yellow official file copy to all incoming material and background information. The order of assembly should be: first the routing slip (if any); the original letter; the courtesy copy (if any); then the yellow official record copy with background material and incoming correspondence; and finally any other copies.

**Figure 14.**  
Official Record Copy Information  
(Compact arrangement)

cc: BCFG (Official, reading files), B, BC, BCF  
BCFG:EJames:ej:10/29/XX:423-8071:[D1]<Dir.A>format:  
file-9C1

Concurrences: BCFG \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ BCF \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
BC \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Mr. Jones will provide Ms. Chase additional  
materials at the meeting next month.

**Figure 15.**  
Official Record Copy Information  
(Vertical arrangement)

cc:  
BCFG (Official file)  
B  
BC  
BCF  
BCFG (Reading file)  
BCFG:EJames:ej:10/29/XX:423-8071:[D1]<Dir.A>  
format:file-9C1

Concurrences: BCFG \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ BCF \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
BC \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Mr. Jones will provide Ms. Chase additional  
materials at the meeting next month.

**Figure 16.**  
Official Record Copy Information Showing a Rewrite and Retype

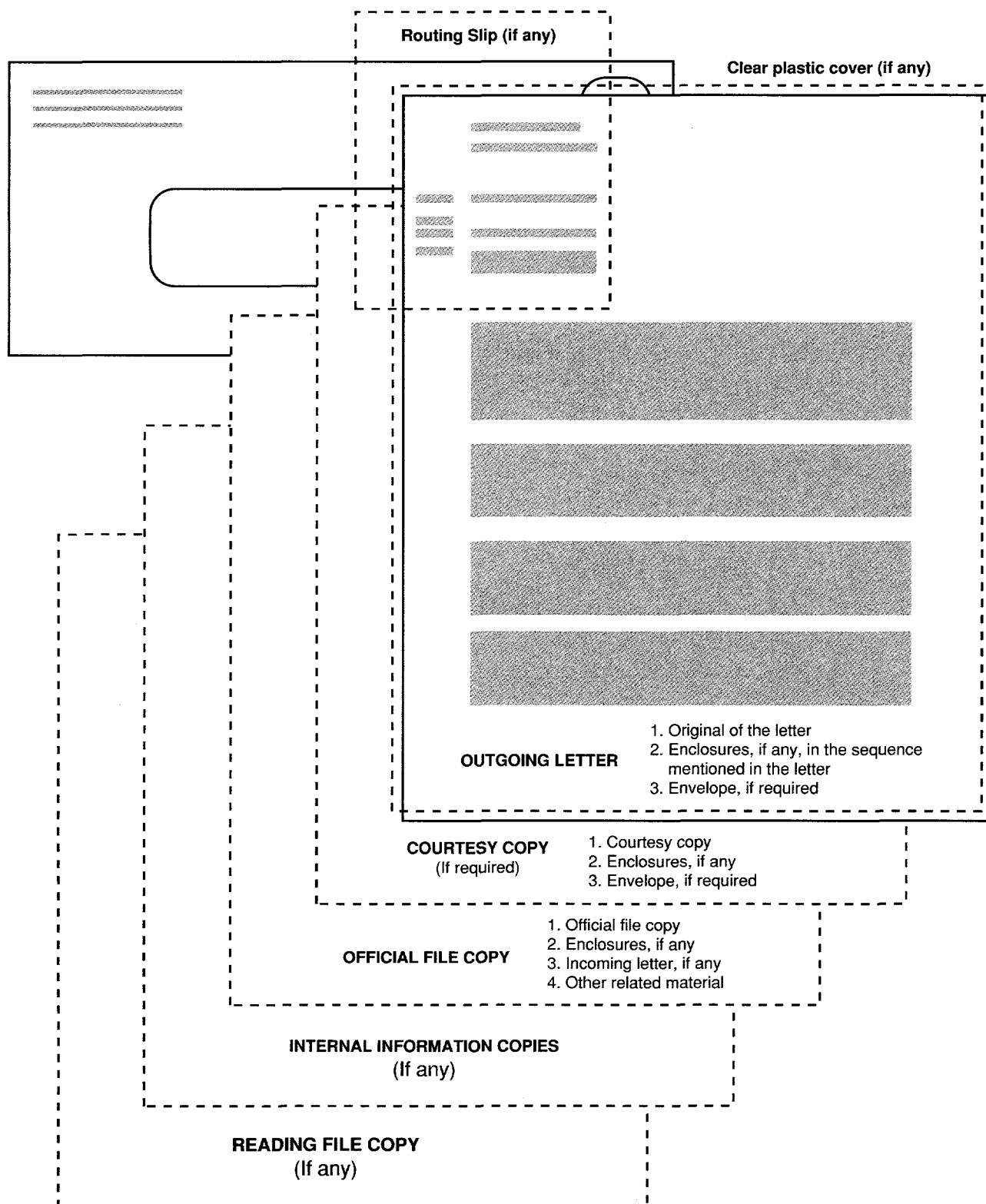
BCFG:EJames:ej:10/29/XX:423-8071:[D1]<Dir.A>format:  
file-9C1

Rewritten:BC:SThompson:ej:11/5/XX:423-8071:[D1]  
<Dir.B>format

(or)

Retyped:BCFG:EJames:mp:11/7/XX:532-  
3417:[D1]<Dir.B>format

**Figure 17.** Assembly for Signature



# CONGRESSIONAL AND WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENCE

## Introduction

This section provides guidelines for preparing and processing congressional and White House correspondence. The designated correspondence control unit in the agency will assign a control number and a suspense date before forwarding the correspondence to an office for action.

## Definitions

### Controlled Correspondence

Controlled correspondence is correspondence that requires a record of receipt and a timely reply.

### Congressional Correspondence

Letters or memorandums sent or referred to an agency by Members of Congress or their staffs require direct replies to either the constituent or the Member.

### White House Correspondence

When an agency receives letters or memorandums from the White House, it must respond directly to the sender or prepare a draft for White House consideration.

## Congressional Correspondence

### Constituent Correspondence

Letters received from constituents are frequently forwarded by Members of Congress to executive agencies. If such a letter is an original, return it to the Member of Congress, whether addressing the reply to the constituent directly or to the Member. When replying to the constituent, send the Congressman a copy of the reply. Individual constituents often send identical inquiries to several Members of Congress. In all cases, an original copy of the reply should be prepared for each Member who requests information from an agency.

### Signed by the Member's Staff

If a letter from a Member of Congress is signed by a congressional staff member, address the reply to the Member rather than to the person who signed the letter.

### Signed by a Congressional Committee Staff Official

If a letter from a congressional committee is signed by a staff official, address the reply to the committee chairperson rather than to the person who signed the letter.

### Signed by More than One Member of Congress

If a letter is signed by more than one Member of Congress, address an original to each Member.

### Away from Washington, DC

If writing to a Member of Congress in a district office, send a copy to the Washington office.

### Former Members of Congress

Letters may be addressed to former members of Congress at the Senate or House of Representatives for a period of 30 days after they leave office. Thereafter, address replies to their home addresses.

### Deceased Member of Congress

Address the letter to the secretary or the Administrative Assistant of the deceased Member unless someone else has been named to receive the correspondence.

### After the Resignation of a Member

After a member resigns and before the congressional district has a new Member, address the correspondence to the office of the congressional district.

### Signing Congressional Correspondence

Replies to congressional correspondence concerning an agency's policy or other substantive matter should be prepared for the signature of the head of an agency or the deputy.

Replies to congressional correspondence concerning routine matters should be prepared for the signatures of the appropriate officials authorized to do so in existing delegations of authority.

## Extension of Suspense Date

If an extension of a suspense date is required, the action office should make the arrangement with the correspondence control unit.

## **Referrals from the White House**

Upon receipt in an agency, White House correspondence should be routed to a correspondence control unit for reply by a

specified date. The White House may occasionally suggest the substance of a particular reply or the action to be taken on a particular letter.

# **OTHER TYPES OF CORRESPONDENCE**

## **Introduction**

Listed below are types of correspondence not considered routine. Refer to a department or agency handbook for further guidance.

## **Classified Correspondence**

The level of security accorded correspondence (such as TOP SECRET, SECRET, CONFIDENTIAL, or others) depends on the degree of importance to national security. These designations are given to information which requires protection from unauthorized access. Classified documents being processed should be kept under constant control to ensure protection. Documents containing such information must be properly marked, transmitted, and safeguarded. Detailed procedures for such handling must be set forth in a departmental or agency handbook or directive in accordance with Executive Order 12356, National Security Information.

## **Sensitive Correspondence**

Sensitive information is exempt from public disclosure by law and must be protected. Such information deals with personal privacy, privileged information furnished by persons or businesses, personnel, medical or investigative data, and internal policy matters.

## **Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Correspondence**

Requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act should be controlled; responses should be prepared in accordance with agency regulations.